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FPM LTR. NO. 412- 1

UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

FEDERAL PERSONNEL MANUAL SYSTEM

LETTER

Washington, D.C. 20415
October 8, 1971

FPM LETTER NO. 412- 1

SUBJECT: Guidelines for Executive Development in the Federal Service

Heads of Departments and Independent Establishments:

During the past few years, the Civil Service Commission in collaboration with the Office of Management and Budget has been studying the need for executive development programs. These efforts have led to the formulation by the Commission of guidelines for establishing and operating programs aimed at development and improvement of career executives.

The guidelines present a variety of ways that agencies may achieve the policy goals for executive development set forth in the Memorandum for the Heads of Departments and Agencies issued by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget on September 14, 1971. The actions proposed in the guidelines are not dramatic nor are they based on new breakthroughs in theory. They are the distillation of the best ideas now being practiced in Government and industry.

Although each agency will need to take varying approaches to meet its problems, the broad objectives are central to all. These objectives are:

1. A high level of organizational commitment:

   Agencies should establish a policy of supporting executive development; and an overall plan including the resources to be committed. They should establish an Executive Manpower Resources Board of senior members of the staff chaired by a principal assistant who reports to the agency head on a regular basis. Where they exist, present Executive Assignment Boards may serve this role. Agencies should also designate a high level person to be an Executive Manpower Management Officer, normally the principal official charged with personnel management responsibilities or with career program management when such programs exist.

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FPM LTR. 412-1 (2)

2. Development plans for each mid-manager of high potential and each incumbent executive:

Agencies should have programs that identify members of the mid-management group with high potential. Then, for each member of this group and for each incumbent executive (normally GS 16-18, and equivalents), the agency should prepare individual development plans.

3. Improved mobility programs:

Agencies should increase their efforts to establish organizational, occupational, and geographic mobility programs as a method of development. Agencies should establish rotational programs within bureaus or among bureaus within an agency. In addition, agencies can establish interagency mobility programs for which employees can volunteer.
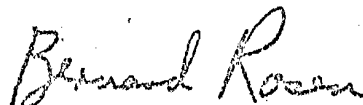
4. More effective training resource utilization:

Three major sources of training exist--agency training, interagency training, and non-Government training. As a result of the planning discussed above, agencies should review their use of the opportunities for management training both inside and outside of the agency.

5. Improved development program evaluation:

Agencies should review how they evaluate the effectiveness of their executive development programs, and assure that management's objectives for executive development are being achieved.

Further details about these features and suggestions on how they may be implemented are contained in Attachment 2 to this letter. Attachment 1 gives the timetable for implementation of the guidelines. Please note that agencies are being asked to report to the Commission on the implementation of their programs in April and September of 1972. A government-wide report for the President will be prepared by the Commission.

The Civil Service Commission stands ready to provide guidance and assistance in this area and, in turn, invites agency comments about the program as well as recommendations for improvements. Inquiries may be directed to the Bureau of Executive Manpower.

Bernard Rosen
Executive Director

Attachments

Timetable for Government-wide Implementation
of Executive Development Guidelines

By 12/31/71

1. The agency should publish a statement of policy on executive development to include the agency's overall goals for an executive development program.

2. The agency should designate the following:

   - The principal assistant who will have primary responsibility for executive development.

   - The members of the Executive Manpower Resources Board (EMRB).

   - The Executive Manpower Management Officer (EMMO).

3. The agency should initiate planning for:

   - Preparation of individual development plans.

   - Preparation of mobility plans for development.

   - Training criteria and resources review.

By 4/30/72

1. The agency should report to the CSC on progress being made to install and operate an executive development program. This report should include:

   - The names of:

     o The principal assistant responsible for executive development.

     o The members of the EMRB.

     o The EMMO.

   - A copy of the agency's policy statement on executive development.

   - A description of the systems to:

     o Identify high potential mid-managers.

     o Prepare individual development plans.

Attachment 1 to FPM LTR. 412-1 (2)

      o Schedule mobility assignments.

      o Schedule training criteria and resources review.

  - A resource requirements plan to implement the executive
    development plan.

2. The agency should make recommendations of revisions to the
guidelines.

By 9/30/72

1. The agency should have established interim and annual goals toward
the accomplishment of policy.

2. The agency should have published guidelines for the operation of
its own EMRB.

3. The agency should report to the CSC on the progress being made to
install and operate an executive development program. This report
should be as specific as possible and include such information as
the following:

  - Number of high potential mid-managers so identified and that
    number's relationship to total population at those grades.

  - Number of individuals by grade for which the agency has pre-
    pared development plans.

  - Number of people on developmental mobility assignments by the
    following categories:

      o Job rotations.

      o Task force or committee assignments.

      o Developmental details.

      o Interchanges.

      o Understudy and vacation replacement assignments.

      o Other.

  - Comments on revisions to the guidelines.

  - Any changes in the names of those responsible for executive
    development, either the principal assistant, the EMMO, or members
    of the EMRB.

4. The CSC will review with the agencies their executive development programs.

5. The CSC will report to the President on the state of executive development Government-wide and for each agency.

UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20415

GUIDELINES
FOR
EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE FEDERAL SERVICE

Introduction

Changing societal values, an advancing technology, and the information revolution have altered the very character of Federal Government. It has become so complex and cumbersome that there is danger of the public losing confidence in it as an effective institution for meeting society's needs. At the same time, the public's rising expectations make it increasingly clear that achieving national goals in keeping with national priorities requires more effective Government.

Effective Government is largely a function of effective management; in turn, effective management is largely a function of effective managers. Executive development programs are rapidly gaining acceptance in industry and Government as essential to assuring the development and maintenance of executive skills.

Development broadens perspectives and provides required knowledge and skills. Development provides essential management continuity without sacrificing responsiveness and flexibility. Development assures use of the best available talent from within the Federal Government without excluding those entering from the outside.

Objectives

The purpose of this document is to provide departments and bureaus with a set of guides for operating an executive development program for incumbent and potential executive talent. The objectives of these guidelines are:

- To describe the elements needed to make such a program viable.

- To describe mechanisms for making such a program operational.

Attachment 2 to FPM LTR. 412-1 (2)

Program Elements

An effective executive development program should:

- Identify and develop high potential individuals in those mid-management groups which supply executives (normally GS 13-15 and equivalents).

- Provide developmental experiences for incumbent executives (normally GS 16-18 and equivalents).

Development for either group should include:

- A variety of formal training experiences.

- Work experiences resulting from mobility programs, rotational and task force assignments, and other on-the-job activities.

An effective executive development program will provide special development programs for those whose opportunities might have been restricted in the past such as in the case of minority group members and women.

The specific activities which can be employed to accomplish executive development are varied and diverse. However, whatever specific measures are used, a successful executive development program would include the following elements:

- High level of organizational commitment.

- Development plans for each mid-manager of high potential and each incumbent executive.

- Improved mobility opportunities.

- More effective training resource utilization.

- Improved development program evaluation.

The discussion which follows describes each of these elements and suggests how to make an executive development program operational. It should be noted that executive development programs operate at various organizational levels within the Government. On the one hand, the executive development program administered by a large bureau, independent agency, or regulatory agency is likely to be highly operational. There is also likely to be someone or some organization at the department level that has an operational responsibility for the employees at that level. On the other hand, the activities of an executive development program administered at the department level of a Cabinet or military department are likely to be more coordinative than operational. These guides are directed to both development components in their coordinative roles and bureaus in their operational roles. (Hereafter, reference to bureaus includes the operational roles within department staffs.)

Attachment 2 to FPM LTR. 412-1 (3)

High Level Organizational Commitment

To accomplish the goals of executive development in the Federal Government, an important facilitating step is formalizing, as institutional entities, the values and practices that are essential to success. To do this the organization head at bureau and department levels should:

- Develop an overall plan for executive development and indicate the resources to be committed.

- Announce a policy of organizational support for executive development to enable each individual executive and aspirant to develop to the fullest extent consistent with both the agency's needs, and his interests, abilities, and willingness to achieve his potential.

- Assign responsibility for executive development to a principal assistant who reports to him on a regular basis. Normally this would be the incumbent of such positions as the Assistant Secretary for Administration. His primary duty would be to insure that executive development programs are consistent with organization goals and priorities.

- Establish a high level Executive Manpower Resources Board (EMRB) made up from the political, career, and military executives of the organization. When Executive Assignment Boards (EAB's) already exist, they may perform this function.

    o This board should monitor the executive development efforts and periodically review progress toward organization objectives.

    o The board should be charged with reporting its stewardship of executive resources to the organization head at least annually.

    o The number of boards established within each agency will depend upon the number and diversity in mission of its constituent bureaus, services, or offices, as well as the number of career positions at grades GS-13 through GS-18 and equivalents. Generally, each major bureau should have its own board, and there should be a department board. Where formalized occupational/ functional career programs are used, an agency may want a board for each of those.

    o Membership should include program managers, as well as the principal assistant responsible for executive development.

- Designate an Executive Manpower Management Officer (EMMO) to provide a focus for all executive manpower activities. Normally this would be the principal official charged with personnel responsibilities at the department and bureau levels.

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Attachment 2 to FPM LTR. 412-1 (4)

o As a resource to management, the EMMO:

+ Acts as executive director for the EMRB and reports in this
function to the principal assistant responsible for execu-
tive development.

+ Reviews internal group development activities, development
assignment systems, performance appraisal programs, external
development activities used by his organization, and other
personnel programs with implication for executives.

+ Maintains liaison with the Civil Service Commission on
executive development.

+ Conducts studies of executive manpower and development and
keeps retirement and attrition statistics.

+ Acts as the office of record for executive development
programs.

o As a resource to the supervisors of those in development programs,
the EMMO supplies guidance on the availability and relevance of
development and training assignments. He assists with coaching,
counseling, defining performance objectives, performance evalua-
tions, and preparation of executive development documents. He
sees to it that the supervisor obtains the necessary training
in coaching and career interviewing.

o As a resource to the individual employee, the EMMO serves as an
additional or alternate source of coaching and counseling.

o In those cases where personnel management is accomplished within
formalized career programs, it might be appropriate to organize
executive development programs within the career programs' present
organizational structures. Thus, the EMMO in these cases might be
principal advisor to the career field manager and serve as coordi-
nator of the EMMO's in the existing career program structures at
the various levels of the organization.

o Coordination of all matters relating to executive development will
be the principal function of the EMMO, and coordination of the
bureau level or career field EMMO's will be a principal function
of the department level EMMO's.

Development Plans

It is not practical or economical to invest the same development efforts in everyone who reaches the mid-management level. But, it is essential that an appropriate number of the high potential mid-managers be groomed for higher levels of responsibility. This requires mechanisms for identifying these high potential individuals which may be either formal or informal. Formal mechanisms are those based on performance appraisal systems or similar standard procedures. Informal mechanisms are numerous and include special inventories, reports of superior performance during training, comments from task force directors, and similar non-regularized indications of high potential.

For each member of the high-potential group (the size of the group is expected to vary) and for each incumbent executive (GS 16-18, and equivalents), the appropriate supervisor should prepare an individual development plan. Both the identification of high potential mid-managers and the preparation of individual development plans should be supported by organization planning to ascertain both the need for key executives and the short and long run availability of high talent people to meet these needs.

Needs are determined by aggregate analysis of organizational growth and expected turnover. While development efforts must be based on planning for individuals, it should be recognized that the number of high potential mid-managers which are to be groomed for higher levels of responsibility must bear some practical relationship to the number of executive positions and turnover in those positions.

Availability can be determined in a variety of ways depending upon the nature of the jobs to be filled:

- Most key jobs in an organization call for skills, knowledges, and experiences common to many of the key jobs in that organization. Moreover, usually within that organization will be found a large number of mid-level employees possessing or developing skills and knowledges pertinent to the key jobs in question. For such key jobs, the organization should assure itself that it has identified an adequate number of high potential individuals at the GS 13-15 level to meet its needs. For those "one-of-a-kind" key jobs supported by a large feeder group, the same system can be used.

- An example of a system for doing this is the formalized occupational/ functional career programs used in some agencies. Typically in such programs a reasonable number of high potential mid-level people are identified as having above average potential for the key positions in the career field.

Attachment 2 to FPM LTR. 412-1 (6)

- For some key jobs in an organization there will not be much of a feeder group at the mid-levels. For each such job, the organization should do a replacement analysis to determine whether it has candidates it would seriously consider for the job and who they are.

In both of the above instances when an individual is determined to have high potential, his supervisor should have that information upon which to base the development plan. Thus, in some cases, the supervisor would base his planning on the knowledge that the employee should be focused toward a group of key jobs calling for common skills. In other cases the supervisor would base the development plan on the knowledge that the employee should be focused toward a few particular jobs.

The needs and availability planning described above serves a number of purposes. It:

- Assures management that a vital program will continue to be lead by highly qualified people.

- Provides management with data on executive manpower needs and shortages, blocked promotion ladders, and overlooked high potential individuals.

- Provides information to supervisors to support coaching sessions and development planning for subordinates.

- Provides information for use by employees to more systematically influence their own careers.

The individual development plan identifies development experiences needed both to improve the individual's current performance and prepare him for those jobs for which he has been identified as a likely replacement. Typical information in an individual development plan would include recommendations for:

- Self-initiated development activities such as:

    o Degree or credential-linked professional development.

    o Professional association activities.

    o Technical and personal skills acquisition.

    o Reading programs.

    o Cultural activities.

- Formal training:

    o Training in managerial perspectives. Such training involves re-
      orienting outlooks and reevaluating priorities as responsibilities
      increase.

    o Training in management techniques and personal skills, including
      short courses designed to introduce, reinforce, or refresh manage-
      ment techniques, to include:

      + Specific techniques such as automatic data processing,
        programs and budgets, operations research, systems analysis,
        labor-management relations, policy analysis, or types of
        coaching and counseling.

      + Environmental skills such as knowledge of informal organiza-
        tions, nature of political leadership, understanding and
        using the legislative and funding process, gaining consensus,
        handling pressures from professional groups, knowledge of
        influence structures, familiarity with program funding
        practices, or working with multiple public strategies.

    o Professional and occupational training including courses of
      varying length designed to keep the individual current in his
      profession or occupation. Included are:

      + Formal courses in an agency.

      + Formal training in an interagency program.

      + Formal courses at an educational institution.

      + Participation in professional conferences, seminars, and
        symposia.

  - Developmental assignments, including short term temporary assignments
    and permanent rotational reassignments (see Mobility Programs below).

It should be recognized that career interviewing and coaching skills will
be needed in an increased amount by supervisors and that professional
assistance and other resources will be required of the training departments.

From an analysis of individual needs, management at various levels can put
together a composite picture of individual and group needs. Aggregating
this data for an organization makes it possible to budget for development
activities; to plan in advance for the utilization of both internal and
external resources; and to determine the cost benefits and trade-offs.

Attachment 2 to FPM LTR. 412-1 (8)

Mobility Programs

Individual development plans will highlight needs for formal training and for on-the-job development. Since much development is accomplished best on the job, departments and bureaus should have organizational occupational mobility programs to support their executive development programs. Bureaus should have programs which provide both short term and long term rotational assignments among the programs of the bureaus. Departments should have similar programs across bureau jurisdictions. In addition, departments and agencies should work out mobility programs across agency lines for which individuals may volunteer.

To gain the benefits of mobility there must be a systematic approach based on individual development plans. There are no legal restraints on mobility programs within bureaus or among bureaus in an agency. Among the possibilities for mobility are a variety of short term developmental assignments which should be considered. They are:

- Task force and committee assignments. These may be ad hoc groups formed to deal with a specific problem which are dissolved upon completion of their immediate task; continuing groups whose membership changes either on the basis of the organizations represented or the organizations' representatives; or long-standing groups with the same organizations and representatives.

- Understudy and vacation replacement assignments. Understudy assignments may be for extended periods, for a short period prior to appointment, or for intermittent periods concurrent with a regular assignment. Vacation replacement assignments may be given in addition to regular duties and rotated among subordinates.

- Details. These are extended-period (but limited in time) assignments that may be used to give the individual special experience, to broaden perspectives, or to satisfy the requirements of a career pattern.

- Interchange assignments. These include interchange with private industry, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, international organizations, and State and local governments.

Among the most effective development activities are job rotation programs. These programs provide permanent reassignments among organizations and between occupations for developmental purposes. They are the basic features of mobility programs and result in movement from bureau to bureau, agency to agency, headquarters to field, and between line and staff.

Some of the patterns of jobs that fit such a scheme are:

- The same or similar jobs differing primarily in geographical area covered such as area officers, district managers, or regional directors in the same service, including deputies in such jobs.

- The same or similar jobs at the central headquarters and in the field activities of a given bureau or department. These jobs would tend to be staff rather than line.

- The same or similar jobs, both line and staff, in different units of an organization.

- The same or similar jobs not under the control of a single organization. There are a number of occupations, primarily staff support, which are very much the same from organization to organization. The individual in furthering his own development may choose to seek multi-bureau or multi-agency experience and avenues of advancement.

- Jobs involving general managership or general administrative skills, even though concerned with diverse programs. Examples would be research and development project managers.

Training Resource Utilization

Many agencies have excellent records of management training and enviable training delivery systems. These should be reviewed in the light of the needs revealed in the individual development plans, so that appropriate resources may be obtained as needed.

Agencies should also review their training programs to determine whether they have adequately considered the most recent trends in education and training. Of particular importance are the following:

- Learning experiences for adults have to be planned for and conducted in ways different from the usually understood educational processes. Effective adult learning involves:

    o Joint leader-participant planning of objectives, methods, and resources.

    o Acceptance of responsibility for the learning by the learner.

    o Relevance of the experience to the needs of the learner.

    o Use of the learners as resources.

    o Methodology that allows interaction of learners.

    o Peer grouping.

Attachment 2 to FPM LTR. 412-1   (10)

- Training programs should include greater emphasis on agency oriented executive training such as:

    o Job related executive learning.

    o Training focused on the organization and the learner.

    o Training dealing with the organization's problems.

    o Training involving management as advisors on content, as resources, and in evaluation.

    o Placing trainees from the same organization together in learning situations.

Training should be recognized as a necessary investment. If management accepts this and commits itself to reasonable investments of money and personnel spaces, training can be systematically planned for and accomplished.

Management at each level should develop and publish specific criteria for executive training programs. Examples of such criteria are:

- A specified percentage of man hours to be devoted to formal training and development each year. As an example, one year of training out of twenty years of service could be accomplished if 5% of a person's time were committed annually to such efforts.

- Attendance at the Federal Executive Institute or an equivalent program at an educational institution as a concomitant to appointment to executive positions.

- Sponsorship of a given number of executive exchanges each year.

- Orientations for all newly appointed executives from outside the Government or from the professional ranks.

Training is available from a variety of sources. Agencies should satisfy their needs by utilizing the appropriate combinations of the following delivery systems:

- Agency sponsored programs including orientations, agency tailored planning sessions, program-oriented skills courses, personal skills development courses, or organizational development seminars.

- Interagency programs designed to impart technical skills and knowledges, develop administrative and managerial capabilities, and exchange information about changing priorities and emphases.

- Non-Government programs including academic courses, industry sponsored executive development programs, or commercial courses.

Attachment 2 to FPM LTR. 412-1 (11)

Program Evaluation

Mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of executive development programs should operate at several levels. These are:

- The effectiveness of development experiences for the individual. This includes relating outcomes of developmental and training experiences to the needs of the organization and the individual by relating outcomes to measures of improved performance and increased potential.

- The effectiveness of sub-systems. For example, performance appraisal procedures could be subjected to validation procedures. Or, the identification process by which high potential individuals from the mid-management group are selected could be evaluated in terms of actual promotions and the quality of those so promoted.

- The effectiveness of the total program. This is a look at the total executive development program of an organization to determine its congruence with the accepted body of values and practices as well as compliance with laws and regulations. In their evaluations, agencies should consider the following factors:

  o Special attention should be given to current utilization of resources and to plans to carry out the recommended program.

  o Evaluation is a determination of the distance covered towards objectives. Therefore, all the agency objectives set by the EMRB for programs or for individuals, specified earlier in these guidelines, serve as the basis for evaluating the impact of the concepts in these guidelines.

  o The descriptions of the program elements and their supporting mechanisms serve as the criteria against which to evaluate the progress which has been made towards meeting objectives. Early systematic evaluation will also provide feedback to judge the accuracy of the original planning for development and training.

  o The Civil Service Commission will review agency plans and progress on a periodic basis. It will share its findings with the agencies, and annually it will combine what it has learned and report to the President on the state of executive development Government-wide and for each agency.

It is anticipated that both the substance and the form of these evaluations will be modified by continued experience.